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AN ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC.

by Dr Hawes, (W.) K

Lately published, Price One Shilling and Six-pence,

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EXAMINATION

OF THE

Rev. Mr. JOHN WESLEY's

PRIMITIVE PHYSIC:

Interſperſed with Medical REMARKS, and Practical OBSERVATIONS, on the following Diſeaſes, viz.

APOPLEXY	FEVERS
ASTHMA	HÆMORRHAGES
BILIOUS COLIC, &c.	INFLAMMATION
CANCER	MEASLES
CONSUMPTION	SORE THROATS
HOOPING COUGH	RHEUMATISM, &c.

By W. HAWES, APOTHECARY.

Prin d for the AUTHOR, and ſold by DODSLEY CADELL, JOHNSON, and FOX.

AN

ADDRESS, &c.

AS the following addreſs relates to a ſubject in which every individual is intereſted, the writer wiſhes to render the knowledge of it as general as poſſible, and for that reaſon has thought proper to publiſh it in a news-paper.

The cuſtom of laying out the bodies of the perſons ſuppoſed to be dead, as ſoon as reſpiration ceaſes, and the interment of them before the ſigns of putrefaction appear, has been frequently oppoſed by men of learning and humanity in this and other countries. Monſ. Bruhier, in particular, a phyſician of great eminence in Paris, publiſhed a piece, about thirty years ago, entitled, "The Uncertainty of the Signs of Death;" in which he clearly proved, from the teſtimonies of various authors, and the atteſtations of unexceptionable witneſſes, that many perſons who have been buried alive, and were providentially diſcovered in that ſtate, had been reſcued from the grave, and enjoyed the pleaſures of ſociety for ſeveral years after.

But notwithſtanding the numerous and well-authenticated facts of this kind, the cuſtom above-mentioned remains in full force. As ſoon as the *ſemblance of death* appears, the chamber of

the ſick is deſerted by friends, relatives, and phyſicians; and the *apparently dead*, though frequently *living* body, is committed to the management of an ignorant and unfeeling nurſe, whoſe care extends no farther than lying the limbs ſtraight, and ſecuring her accuſtomed ſpoil. The bed-cloaths are immediately removed, and the body is expoſed to the air, which, when cold, muſt extinguiſh the little ſpark of life that may remain, and which, by a different treatment, might have been kindled into flame *.

I am willing, however, to hope, that, ſince it has of late been ſo frequently demonſtrated, that the vital principle may exiſt, where the characteriſtics of death, except putrefaction, are preſent, the rational part of the community are, at length, diſpoſed to pay ſome attention to this ſubject.

With that hope I ſhall venture to particularize a few of the caſes in which this *fallacious appearance* is moſt likely to happen, and point out the mode of treatment, which, according to the beſt of my judgment, ſhould be reſpectively adopted.

In apoplectic and fainting fits, and in thoſe ariſing from any violent agitation of mind, and alſo when *opium* or *ſpiritous liquors* have been taken in too great a quantity, ‡ there is reaſon to believe

* Alluding to the motto of the medal given by the Humane Society, *Lateat Scintillula Forſan.*

‡ I ſhould think myſelf extremely culpable if I neglected this opportunity, of cautioning *parents and nurſes* againſt the free uſe of GODFREY'S CORDIAL. It is a ſtrong ſolution of *opium*, and I am perſuaded that the ſleep it produces, has proved the *ſleep of death* to thouſands of children.

When

believe that the *appearance* of death has been frequently miſtaken for the *reality*. In theſe caſes, the means recommended by the *Humane Society for the Recovery of Drowned Perſons* ſhould be perſevered in for ſeveral hours, and bleeding, which, in ſimilar circumſtances, has ſometimes proved pernicious, ſhould be uſed with great caution.

In the two latter inſtances it will be highly expedient, with a view of counteracting the ſoporific effects of opium and ſpirits, to convey into the ſtomach, by a proper tube, a ſolution of tartar emetic, and, by various other means, to excite vomiting.

From the number of children carried off by convulſions, and the certainty, ariſing from undoubted facts, that ſome who have, in appearance, died from that cauſe, have been recovered, † there

When this poiſonous cordial has been given in a dangerous doſe, and a diſcovery of it is made before the power of ſwallowing is loſt, it will be adviſeable to give the child a tea ſpoonful of ipecacuan wine every quarter of an hour, till the contents of the ſtomach are diſcharged. *See alſo page 29 of the Examination of the Rev. Mr. J. Weſley's Primitive Phyſic, interſperſed with meaical remarks, and practical obſervations, publiſhed by the preſent writer.*

† A remarkable fact of this kind may be found in the Ephemerid. Medico Phyſ.—Germ. Ann. Oct. the ſubſtance of which is as follows:—A girl, about ſeven years of age, who had been for ſome weeks before troubled with a bad cough, was ſuddenly ſeized with a fit; a phyſician was immediately ſent for, who, finding that the heart and

there is the greateſt reaſon for concluding, that many, in conſequence of this diſeaſe, have been prematurely numbered among the dead; and that the fond parent, by neglecting the means of recalling life, has often been the guiltleſs executioner of her own offspring.

To prevent the commiſſion of ſuch dreadful miſtakes, no child, whoſe life has been apparently extinguiſhed by convulſions, ſhould be *conſigned* to the grave, till the means of recovery, above-recommended in apoplexies, &c. have been tried; and, if poſſible, under the direction of ſome ſkilful practitioner of medicine, who may vary them as circumſtances ſhall require.

When fevers ariſe in weak habits, or when the cure of them has been principally attempted by means of depletion, the conſequent debility is often very great, and the patient ſometimes ſinks into a ſtate which bears ſo cloſe an affinity

and lungs had ceaſed to perform their functions, that her lips and cheeks were pale, and her temples ſunk, concluded that life was irrecoverably loſt. For the ſatisfaction, however, of her afflicted parents, a clyſter was adminiſtered, and her wriſts were chafed with ſpiritous water; but no ſign of life appearing, the ſoles of the feet were ordered to be rubbed with *ſtrong brine*; and the friction was continued without intermiſſion three quarters of an hour; at the end of which time ſhe began to breathe. The friction was then increaſed; two or three deep inſpirations followed, and in a ſhort time the child, who was ſuppoſed to be dead by the phyſician, as well as the by-ſtanders, was, to the ſurpriſe of both, and the great joy of her parents, reſtored to life and health.

affinity to that of death, that, I am afraid, it has too often deceived the by-ſtanders, and induced them to ſend for the undertaker, when they ſhould have had recourſe to the ſuccours of medicine.

In ſuch caſes, Volatiles, *Eau de luce*, for example, ſhould be applied to the noſe, rubbed on the temples, and ſprinkled often about the bed; hot flannels, moiſtened with a ſtrong ſolution of camphorated ſpirit, may likewiſe be applied over the breaſt, and renewed every quarter of an hour; and as ſoon as the patient is able to ſwallow, a tea ſpoonful of the ſtrongeſt cordial ſhould be given every five minutes.

The ſame methods may alſo be uſed with propriety in the ſmall pox, when the puſtules ſink, and death apparently enſues; and likewiſe in any other acute diſeaſes, when the vital functions are ſuſpended from a ſimilar cauſe.

Even in old age, when life ſeems to have been gradually drawing to a cloſe, the *appearances of death* are often fallacious.

Not many years ſince, a lady in Cornwall, more than eighty years of age, who had been a conſiderable time declining, took to her bed, and in a few days ſeemingly expired in the morning. As ſhe had often deſired not to be buried till ſhe had been two days dead, her requeſt was to have been regularly complied with by her relations. All that ſaw her looked upon her as dead, and the report was current through the whole place; nay, a gentleman of the town actually wrote to his friend in the Iſland of Scilly, that ſhe was deceaſed. But one of thoſe who were paying the laſt kind office of humanity to her remains, perceived ſome warmth about the middle of the back, and acquainting her friends

with it, they applied a mirrour to her mouth; but after repeated trials, could not obſerve it in the leaſt ſtained; her under jaw was likewiſe fallen, as the common phraſe is, and, in ſhort, ſhe had every appearance of a dead perſon. All this time ſhe had not been ſtripped or dreſſed, but the windows were opened, as is uſual in the chambers of the deceaſed. In the evening the heat ſeemed to increaſe, and at length ſhe was perceived to breathe."

See Lond. Chron. vol. 4, p. 465.

It was the intention of the writer to publiſh a work upon this ſubject, but as his various avocations will not permit him to carry that deſign into execution, he thought it his duty to throw out the above hints; and if they ſhould be the means of preventing one perſon from being laid out, or, what is more horrible, buried alive, it will afford the writer a pleaſure of the nobleſt kind, that ariſing from the conſciouſneſs of doing good to his fellow creatures.

W. HAWES.

Palſgrave Place, Sept. 5.

P. S. If that regard be paid to the above addreſs which the ſubject of it ſeems to demand, and any life or lives be ſaved in conſequence of the hints that I have thrown out, the communication of any ſuch inſtances of ſucceſs will be eſteemed a particular favour; as it will afford me the moſt ſolid pleaſure, and be a ſatisfactory evidence that a man, who labours to promote the intereſts of humanity, will be attended to by the public.

TO THE

PUBLIC,

In Reply to the ADDRESS ſigned

W. HAWES.

OPINIONS founded in *error*, where they have a tendency to affect the public welfare, cannot be too early refuted. The ſubſequent curſory remarks are left to be enlarged on by thoſe whoſe abilities and ſituation are more favourable for ſuch diſcuſſion.

The general addreſs, relative to the *protraction* recommended in burying the dead, is by far of a more alarming nature than any thing that has hitherto tranſpired, reſpecting our martial operations on the other ſide of the Atlantic. Dreadful might be the reſult, ſhould ſuch advice be univerſally adhered to. Diſeaſe has ever proved more fatal than the weapons of art; and the adoption of the ſentiments alluded to, would be to produce a general peſtilence.

The author inſinuates, that the dead ſhould not be interred, or rather, that they ſhould not even be *prepared* for that intention, till ſigns of external *putrefaction* appear, which often may not happen till ſeveral days after the internal corruption of the viſcera. The impropriety of ſuch inſinuation muſt be obvious to every one who conſiders the obnoxious influence of reſpired air impregnated with the contaminating effluvia of mor-

tified bodies. Whether the extended atmoſphere became generally infected, or ſuch infection was confined to the reſpective dwellings where the dead were ſuffered to corrupt, thoſe malignant maladies could ſcarcely fail to ſupervene, which would in time become univerſally contagious. This has been often experienced in military campaigns, while the putrid exhalations of corpſes not ſpeedily buried, have generated that epidemical indiſpoſition, which has proved more deſtructive than all the other devaſtations of war. If then the health of the living ſo eſſentially depends on the *purity of the element we breathe*, and without which we cannot exiſt, it is manifeſtly evident, that a compliance with the propoſition before mentioned, would be attended with conſequences diametrically oppoſite to its expreſſed intention, if a propoſal may be deemed inſalutary, which, with an *uncertain* view of prolonging the life of a *ſingle* individual, would have a *certain* tendency to endanger the lives of *thouſands*. That the apprehenſions of the addreſſer may not be altogether without foundation, is not denied; but it is by no means warrantable or judicious to attempt to remove a *leſſer* evil, at the expence of a *greater*. That gentleman will therefore excuſe the writer, for adding, in oppoſition to his own anticipated ſatisfaction from the reverſe, that he will think himſelf happy, ſhould the preceding animadverſions be found to have contributed to render his propoſed innovation abortive, notwithſtanding the writer's equal diſinclination to be buried *durante vita*.

With reſpect to the cuſtomary offices that ſucceed the apparent diſcontinuance of reſpiration, it would certainly be right not to expoſe the body

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to the external air for a few hours after, or till the ſeveral parts are cold enough to produce that rigidity, which, though not always, is *generally* a certain indication of the vital extinction, or at leaſt not to be *over haſty* in the ceremonies of ſuch a department. It would alſo be prudent for the friends and relations of the deceaſed, to refrain from the unavailable cuſtom with many, of taking their farewell of the dead by a labial ſalutation before the coffin is cloſed; nor ſhould any one be longer or oftener in the apartment where the corpſe is laid, after there has been time for the fluids and abdominal viſcera to corrupt, than there is occaſion for.

The ſtrictures on *Godfrey's Cordial*, with which Mr. Hawes concludes his Addreſs, are obviouſly pertinent, and merit the moſt ſerious attention, not only of the public in general, but of the legiſlature in particular, with reſpect to the interdiction of the ſale of a medicine, which muſt often not only prove mortally deleterious, but *enfeeble* the conſtitution of thoſe children who ſurvive its pernicious influence, from whence proceed the diſeaſes of maturer age, and the generation of weakly progenies. This is certainly a public grievance, that cannot be too early redreſſed, and in which the greateſt vigilance may not prove ſufficient to prevent the firſt families in the kingdom from being domeſtically intereſted.

W. RENWICK.

Berwick upon Tweed,
Sept. 12, 1777.

TO

Mr. RENWICK,

OF BERWICK UPON TWEED.

SIR,

AS you have, in a very liberal and gentleman-like manner, propoſed an objection to *one* of the cautions contained in my addreſs, concerning the dangerous cuſtom of laying out perſons as ſoon as *apparently* dead, or, in other words, as ſoon as reſpiration ceaſes; I think it a duty I owe both to you and the public, to ſtate my reaſons for thinking that objection of no force.

I am happy to find that you perfectly agree with me in my leading principle, the impropriety of laying out perſons immediately upon the appearance of death. "With reſpect to the cuſtomary offices that ſucceed the apparent diſcontinuance of reſpiration, it would certainly be right, you obſerve, not to expoſe the body to the external air for a few hours after, or till the ſeveral parts are cold enough to produce that rigidity, which, though not always, is generally a certain indication of the vital extinction, or at leaſt not to be *over-haſty* in the ceremonies of ſuch a department."

Theſe, Sir, are your own words, and I have read them with pleaſure, becauſe they confirm the *propriety* of my principal caution, and will, I hope, efficaciouſly co-operate with it in aboliſhing the *inhuman* cuſtom above-mentioned.

Your objection to my other caution, reſpecting the *interment* of bodies, ſeems, in a great meaſure

ſure, to be founded on a miſconception of my meaning. "The author of the addreſs, you ſay, inſinuates, that the dead ſhould not be interred, or rather that they ſhould not be *prepared* for that intention, till ſigns of external putrefaction appear." Permit me, Sir, to cite the paſſages which more immediately relate to interment, and you will perceive, upon reading them again, that I have not thrown out the inſinuation which you have *haſtily* imputed to me. The paſſages are theſe: "The cuſtom of *laying* out the bodies of perſons ſuppoſed to be dead, as ſoon as reſpiration ceaſes, and the interment of them before the ſigns of putrefaction appear, has been frequently oppoſed by men of learning and humanity in this and other countries. Monſ. Bruhier, in particular, a phyſician of great eminence in Paris, publiſhed a piece about thirty years ago, entitled, 'The Uncertainty of the Signs of Death;' in which he clearly proved, from the teſtimonies of various authors, and the atteſtations of unexceptionable witneſſes, that many perſons who had been buried alive, and were providentially diſcovered in that ſtate, had been reſcued from the grave, and enjoyed the pleaſures of ſociety for ſeveral years after."

"But notwithſtanding the numerous and well authenticated facts of this kind, the cuſtom abovementioned remains in full force. As ſoon as the *ſemblance* of death appears, the chamber of the ſick is deſerted by friends, relatives, and phyſicians, and the *apparently dead*, though frequently *living*, body, is committed to the management of an ignorant and unfeeling nurſe, whoſe care extends no farther than laying the limbs ſtraight, and ſecuring her accuſtomed ſpoil. The bed-

cloaths

cloaths are *immediately* removed, and the body is expoſed to the air, which, when cold, muſt *extinguiſh* the little ſpark of life that may remain, and which by a different method might have been kindled into flame."

But admitting I had inſinuated, that the dead ſhould not be *prepared* for interment till ſigns of external putrefaction appear, I think that even then your *dreadful apprehenſions* would have been entirely groundleſs. The ſigns of putrefaction, in the firſt ſtage of that proceſs, and which are deciſive indications of death, are not accompanied with fœtor, and conſequently no miſchief from your own principle can poſſibly ariſe in waiting for their appearance. In the ſecond ſtage, indeed, a fœtid and injurious vapour ariſes; but unleſs the maſs of putrefying matter be very conſiderable, as has ſometimes been the caſe after battles, &c. when the ſlain have been left unburied, that vapour is in a very ſhort time combined with the air, and entirely diſarmed of its danger.† If this were not the caſe, the air of London, from the quantity of animal and vegetable matter continually putrefying in the ſtreets, &c. would very ſoon become intolerably offenſive, and altogether unfit for the purpoſes of reſpiration.

But "the ſigns of *external* putrefaction, you ſay, may not happen till ſeveral days after the *internal*

† For the law which obtains in the chemical combination of air and variolous vapour, and which is the ſame, I preſume, as that which obtains in the combination of air and putrid vapour, ſee Dr. Watkinſon's "Examination of a Charge brought againſt Inoculation," &c.

internal corruption of the viſcera." Be it ſo, Sir; it furniſhes no objection to the rule I have recommended; for if the abdominal viſcera corrupt, and no putrid vapour eſcapes, the air cannot be "impregnated with contaminating effluvia." If putrid vapour ſhould eſcape in any conſiderable quantity, it is a *ſign* that putrefaction has taken place, and that the body may ſafely be interred. In general, however, a putrid diſcoloration of ſome parts of the body, particularly of the abdomen, precedes the exhalation of any noxious vapour, as is well known to thoſe who are converſant in diſſections. But the time which may elapſe before this diſcoloration appears, is very uncertain, as it depends on the nature of the diſeaſe which terminated life, the heat of the weather, and various other cauſes.

To conclude, I wiſh it were deeply impreſſed upon the mind of every individual, that the only *unequivocal* ſigns of death are the marks of putrefaction;‡ and that thoſe who are committed to the earth before theſe marks are diſcovered, may poſſibly be buried alive. But I wiſh it were ſtill *deeper impreſſed*, that the danger of being buried alive, though the fact has frequently happened, is not

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‡ Many recent proofs of the truth of this aſſertion might be produced; but it will be ſufficient to refer the reader to the "Reports of the Humane Society" for the years 1774, 1775, and 1776; to a letter in the General Advertiſer of the 11th of September, relative to the death of the late Mr. Holland, ſigned Theatricus; and alſo to one in the Public Ledger of the 10th of the ſame month, reſpecting the *premature* interment of the late Dr. Pull, of Leiceſter.

ſo great as that of being *laid out* as dead, whilſt living, and having the vital ſpark *extinguiſhed* by a precipitate expoſure to cold air. I cannot, therefore, omit this opportunity of again exhorting thoſe whom it may concern, not to conſider the perſons who apparently die of apoplectic and other fits, and eſpecially *young children* who are carried off by convulſions, as irrecoverably loſt, till the proper means of reſtoration have been tried.

Having in juſtice to the public, to you, and myſelf, given this explanation of my caution, relating to the interment of the dead, and vindicated the propriety of it againſt the objection to which, in your opinion, it was liable; I ſhall beg leave, *on my part*, to put an end to the diſpute.—Controverſy is not agreeable to me; and if it were, the duties of my profeſſion, and other increaſing cares, would not permit me to proſecute it.

I am, Sir, with due reſpect,
Your very humble ſervant,

W. HAWES.

Palſgrave Place,
Oct. 1.